Abraham Wood and his Possible Connection to Major Peter Jones and Rev Richard Jones and their Descendants

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For generations, genealogists have debated the significance of the term "grandchildren in law" as used in Abraham WOOD's will. Recent YDNA evidence establishing a paternal link between Major Peter JONES and Rev. Richard JONES[1] has cast new light on this long-standing mystery, unveiling intriguing new possibilities regarding the relationships between these three men. To substantiate these emerging theories, it is essential for additional male descendants bearing the Jones surname—whose lineage can be confirmed through primary sources—to participate in BIGY700 testing via www.FamilyTreeDNA.com and to join the Jones Surname Project. This will enable FTDNA to fine tune their aging estimates of their common ancestor.

To establish a foundation for this analysis, we turn first to the primary source documents that shed light on the children of Major Peter JONES. Two key records serve this purpose: the 1681 will of Abraham WOOD[2] and the 1719 will of Margaret MNU JONES COCKE[3]. In his will, Abraham WOOD identifies Abraham JONES, Richard JONES, Peter JONES, and William JONES as his "grandchildren in law," and specifies that they should be allowed to make selections according to their seniority. In colonial Virginia (and other southern colonies), wills often listed children in the order of their birth, particularly sons, because of the legal and cultural significance of primogeniture and inheritance customs. While not universally rigid, this order often reflected familial hierarchy and social expectations tied to birth order.[4] Since it was customary at the time for seniority to be implied within a will, the authors believe that the explicit mention of seniority was included to indicate the existence of two families, and to clarify that the children of the elder son did not automatically inherit before the children of the younger son.

Margaret MNU JONES COCKE's will, written nearly four decades later, references her grandson Peter JONES, "the son of my son the late Abraham JONES"; her own son Peter JONES; and her grandson Peter WYNN, born to her daughter Mary JONES (who married Major Joshua WYNN[5,6]). Notably absent from Margaret's will are Richard JONES and William JONES, both of whom are named in Abraham WOOD's earlier document. The omission of William is explainable: records show that William died before August 1694, as evidenced by Peter JONES's return of William's estate account[7]. Since no children are mentioned in that return, it is logical that Margaret, writing her will 25 years later, did not include her

deceased son among her heirs. This leads to the unresolved question of Richard JONES's identity, as listed in Abraham WOOD's will.

One plausible scenario that accounts for all the established facts from the wills of Margaret MNU JONES COCKE and Abraham WOOD is that Major Peter JONES and Rev. Richard JONES were brothers, and that Abraham WOOD became their stepfather by marrying their widowed mother.

In Colonial Virginia, the term Grandchildren in Law may have been used to indicate Step Grandchildren.[8] Abraham, in his will, could have been referring to his wife's grandchildren. If so, then the Richard mentioned would be Captain Richard JONES, son of Rev Richard JONES[9]. This could also clarify why Peter JONES named his child Abraham Wood JONES (to honor his stepfather), despite the rarity of middle names in Colonial Virginia at that time. To illustrate: even 150 years later, during the Revolutionary War, only 5% of the population had middle names.[10] Abraham WOOD's inclusion of the phrase, 'The four grandchildren-in-law would choose in order of seniority, that Abraham Wood JONES, son of Major Peter JONES, is the oldest, followed by Captain Richard JONES, son of Rev. Richard JONES, as next in seniority,' appears to be a deliberate clarification of the family structure and inheritance order.

The only way to attempt to prove their brotherhood—absent discovery of further primary source documents—is to encourage more men with the surname Jones, and with primary source documentation tying them to either of these gentlemen, to take the BIGY700 test at FamilyTreeDNA (www.familytreedna.com).[11] The results of the SNPs generated by this test may, in time, indicate that they were brothers. Nevertheless, in the absence of such information, this theory currently aligns with all known facts. For detailed information about YDNA testing proving that Major Peter JONES and Rev Richard JONES can be found in the research paper "*Major Peter JONES and Rev Richard JONES of Early Charles City County, are Related, there is No Evidence of Welsh Ancestry*" written by the authors of this research paper. Contact the authors for a copy of this research paper.

The first known mention of Peter JONES is in 1657 when he witnessed a document for Abraham WOOD, Peter would have had to been at least 14 years old[12]. In 1661 there is a record that shows Peter JONES is now a Captain in the military.[13] In colonial Virginia during the mid-1600s, a man holding the title of captain was usually at least in his late twenties to early forties, often with some standing in the community, such as being a landowner, member of the gentry, or justice of the peace. The title "captain" was more than a military rank; it also carried social and political weight in local governance and often came with militia responsibility for local defense.[14] Based on these two records Major Peter JONES

would be born in 1636 or earlier. This is assuming that Abraham WOOD was using his influence to make him a Captain at the age of 25. The last known mention of Major Peter JONES appears in 1675, when he served as a witness to Abraham WOOD's conveyance of land to his son-in-law Thomas Chamberlayne[15]. Since neither Major Peter JONES nor Rev Richard JONES are mentioned in Abraham WOOD's will in 1681 it implies that both are already deceased, as living children are normally mentioned even if they are not inheriting[16]. The above analysis indicates that Peter JONES was 44 years old or older when he died about 1680.

Rev. Richard JONES' last record was in 1679 when he was executor for Henry PRESTON .[17] Since Richard was not mentioned in the will of Abraham WOOD, this supports that he was also deceased before that will was written. The first record for Rev Richard JONES was in 1650 when he received a land grant on Merchants Hope Old Towne, in 1650 he was referred to as a Clerk.[18] This reference as a clerk would mean that he would have to be at least 21 years of age and have studied 12 to 18 months as a deputy clerk.[19] These requirements would put his birth about 1627 to be a full clerk in 1650. In1653 was the first record that mentions Richard as a minister.[20] This would fit with the lack of records as a clerk between those years if he had returned to England to study Ministry. Becoming an Anglican minister would have required a three-month round trip to England and at least four months of study.[21]

In analyzing the records of Peter and Richard JONES the birth year estimates of 1636 and 1627 respectively do reflect that they could be siblings. However, even BIGY700 SNPs will have a 40-to-80-year range within an SNP. With this timing who was in Charles City County earlier who could have been the father of these Jones'?

In Appendix 1 there is a list of all the Jones men who the authors could identify with records who lived in Colonial Virginia before 1640. There could have been additional records that did not survive until the present day so the list could be potentially longer. There is one very interesting candidate, Rev Richard JONES who received a cow named Cherry in the will of Captain Thomas PAWLETT in 1632.[22] The case for Rev. Richard Jones (bn abt 1600) as the likely father of Major Peter JONES and Rev Richard JONES (bn abt 1627) is further supported by the close ties between Edward BLAND and Abraham WOOD, who were trading partners.[23] Edward's brother, John BLAND, acquired land that had been bequeathed by Thomas PAWLETT to his own brother John[24]. These interconnected relationships suggest that Abraham WOOD moved within the same social circles as the Rev. Richard JONES who had inherited Cherry the Cow from Thomas PAWLETT and thus would have had the opportunity to marry his widow. Being an Anglican Minister in 1632 would have him born about 1600 to 1610 which is the correct age for being the father of Major Peter JONES and

Rev Richard JONES. In that vein Rev Richard JONES followed in his father's footsteps while Major Peter JONES followed in his stepfather's footsteps. This conjecture is far from proven, there is another matching YDNA's tester's line leading us to a different early Jones ancestor that could shed light on whether Major Peter and Rev Richard JONES were siblings.

Recent YDNA evidence establishing a paternal link between Major Peter JONES and Rev. Richard JONES has prompted renewed investigation into the meaning of "grandchildren in law" as used in Abraham WOOD's 1681 will. Analysis of primary sources namely the wills of Abraham WOOD and Margaret MNU JONES COCKE raises questions about the familial relationships among the Jones heirs, especially given the omission of certain names and the evolving use of middle names in colonial Virginia. To clarify these relationships, additional YDNA testing to the BIGY700 level among Jones descendants with well documented lineages is essential. Such genetic evidence, combined with careful analysis of primary source documents, remains crucial to resolving these longstanding genealogical questions.

If you would like information about testing contact the authors at the emails below.
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Appendix 1 -- List of Early VA Jones Men

Jones Men Counted on the 1624/25 Muster Role

Muster of Abraham Peirsey – Flower De Hundred

1. Peter Jones – age 24 – Southampton in 1623 Ship Southampton. Age 24. Adv of Purse & Person, 4th Edition, pg. 23
2. William Jones – age 23 – Southampton in 1623 Adv of Purse & Person, 4th Edition, pg. 23

Muster of Samuel Mathews– Capt Mathews Plantation James Citty

1. Henery Jones – age 25 – Southampton 1623 Adv of Purse & Person, 4th Edition.

Servants at James Citty

1. Anthony Jones – age 26 – Temperance 1620

The Muster of David Jones

1. David Jones – age 22 – Truelove 1622

The Muster of the Inhabitants of Pasbehays & The Maine

1. Thomas Jones and his wife Margrett Jones – NO AGE LISTED – London Merchant – No arrival date provided just listed as taken in 1624

List of Those Killed in the March 1622 Indian Uprising – Ages not Given

1. Owen Jones – One of Capt. Berekeley's People – Henrico Iland, 2 miles outside of Sheffield's Plantation
2. Thomas Jones – Capt. Smith's Company – Charles-Citie
3. George Jones – Martins-Hundred, 7 miles from James Cittie
4. Alice Jones – At Mr. Edwards Bennets Plantation

List of the Names of the Dead in VA Since April Last – 16 Feb 1623

1. Richard Jones – At Flower de Hundred
2. William Jones, his son and servant At James Cittie
3. John Jones – At the Plantation over agt Jame Cittie
4. Phillip Jones – At Warwick Squarke
5. George Jones – At Elizabeth Cittie
6. William Jones

List of the Living 16 Feb 1623

1. Thomas Jones – Colledg Land
2. Anthony Jones – At Flowerdew Hundred
3. Thomas Jones, Uxor Jones – In the Maine

4. William Jones, Uxor Jones – In James Island
5. Thomas Jones – At Warwick Square
6. Richard Jones – At Elizabeth Citie
7. Theodore Jones – At Elizabeth Citie

Website for the information on the above lists of the living and the dead:
https://www.jamestowne.org/1623-lists-of-living--dead.html

The information below is related to ALL JONES MEN prior to 1640:

Rev Richard Jones – ***Most likely Candidate to be father of Major Peter and Rev Richard Jones*.** He was bequeathed Cherry the Cow by Thomas PAWLETT. Born abt. 1600 or so – age based on will info.

Peter Jones – Arrived 1635 – Ship Expedition, London England to Barbados, aged 30-35. Source: Complete Book of Emigrants. *This Peter Jones was in Barbados, 1635, 1658-1660. 1658-1660 he had multiple men bound to him and his wife, Elizabeth, for multiple years at a time.*

Peter Jones – James Duppa c. Peter Jones. 1636/7; VA Colonial Records Project; Depository: Public Records Office; Survey Report 12510. *This Peter Jones is referred to as the brother-in-law of one James Duppa. This Peter Jones is most likely the Merchant Peter Jones, out of England.*

Cadwallader Jones. Age 22 arrived on the Marmaduke. Stationed at Archer's Hope., Adv of Purse & Person, 4th Edition Pg. 37

Edward Jones. Listed in 1624 as Dead at the plantation called Over the Watter. No age given. Adv of Purse & Person, 4th Edition, Pg. 43.

Thomas Jones and his wife, Margrett. No ages given. Arrived on the Ship London. Adv of Purse & Person, 4th Edition, Pg. 25.

[1] Reference the research paper Maj Peter JONES and Rev Richard JONES of Early Charles City County, are Related and there is No Evidence of Welsh Ancestry.
[2] Magazine of VA Genealogy Vol 57, Feb 2019 Number 1. Ibc 1 transcribed by Barbara Vines LITTLE.
[3] Will of Margaret COCKE found at Family Search at this weblink https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99GY-B3V?view=fullText&keywords=Turpin&groupId=M9VV-DVN&lang=en
[4] Greene, Jack P. Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
[5] Peter WYNN names Joshua WYNN as his father in this Court Order which can be found at Family Search at this link https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS4X-W1FV?view=fullText&keywords=Wynn%2Cwill&lang=en&groupId=M9J6-WM2
[6] Mary WYNN signs deed and gives up dower rights for land Joshua WYNN was selling which can be found at family search at this link https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9PX-V39F-5?view=fullText&keywords=Mary%20Wynne%2CMary%2CWynne&lang=en&groupId=M9JJ-Z4C
[7] Peter Jones returned acct. of William Jones' Estate (dec'd). Henrico County Order Bk, Vol. 5, pg 511. "Capt W. Randolph in charge of estate of William Jones, dec'd. April Court 1695". Colonial Wills of Henrico, Co; 1654-1737.
[8] Michelle Norris, "The Language of Colonial Relationships," Vita Brevis blog, New England Historic Genealogical Society, May 5 2017, https://vitabrevis.americanancestors.org/2017/05/language-colonial-relationships/.. – Especially the example of James Blake (1675–1754), whose "sons-in-law" were in fact his wife's sons by a previous marriage (i.e., step-sons), and Norris's commentary that "any relationships created by legal means, including step-relationships, were often identified simply as 'in-law.'"
[9] This relationship is accepted by Jamestown Society as proven from the book Adventures of Purse and Person 4th Edition 4 Volumes
[10] National Park Service article "Why No Middle Names? The Absence of Middle Names in Early America" Notes that only about 5 percent of Americans born in the Revolutionary War era carried middle names, and that the custom began among wealthy families in the late 1700s. EndNote (Chicago) %0 Web Page %T Why No Middle Names? The Absence of Middle Names in Early America %I U.S. National Park Service %U https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/why-no-middle-names.htm %D [accessed June 23 2025]
[11] www.familytreedna.com
[12] William Waller Hening, The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619, vol. 4 (Richmond: Franklin Press, 1820), 223.
[13] This record can be found at Family Search at this link. https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLS-KYXW?view=fullText&keywords=Wood%2Cwood&lang=en&groupId=TH-909-72979-23925-55
[14] McIlwaine, H. R., editor. Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 1622–1632, 1670–1676. Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1924.
[15] This deed can be found at Family Search at this link https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9GY-QHQF?view=fullText&keywords=Isham&lang=en&groupId=M9N5-M8H
[16] William Waller Hening, The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619, vol. 4 (Richmond: Franklin Press, 1820), 223,
[17] Charles City County Order Bk 1676-79 pg 419. In addition, Jamestown Society recognizes this as the last date that he was found on their website. A9697; fl. 1679 Charles City Co.: (Anglican Minister). https://www.jamestowne.org/ancestors-hatcher---luddington.html
[18] Cavaliers and Pioneers Vol 1 pgs 202 and 316.
[19] William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature (Richmond: Franklin Press for Thomas Nicolson, 1823), vol. 1, 74.
[20] This record can be found on Family Search at this link https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9PC-2Z9F?view=fullText&keywords=Crewes&lang=en&groupId=M995-W53

[21] James B. Bell, “Anglican Clergy in Colonial America Ordained by Bishops of London,” Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 53 (1943): 103–104.
[22] Lyon Gardiner Tyler, “Title of Westover,” William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine 4, no. 3 (January 1896): 152. The original of this will is in William Byrd’s handwritten book located at the Museum of History and Culture in Richmond VA.
[23] Kristalyn Marie Shefveland, Anglo-Native Virginia: Trade, Conversion, and Indian Slavery in the Old Dominion, 1646–1722 (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2018).
[24] Lyon Gardiner Tyler, “Title of Westover,” William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine 4, no. 3 (January 1896): 152. The original of this will is in William Byrd’s handwritten book located at the Museum of History and Culture in Richmond VA.